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SENATE MEMORIAL 59

**48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2007**

INTRODUCED BY

Richard C. Martinez

A MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING THE ROLE OF GENIZAROS IN NEW MEXICO HISTORY AND  
THEIR LEGACY.

WHEREAS, indigenous captivity and servitude were common in  
frontier society that became New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, various indigenous peoples, including Apache,  
Dine (Navajo), Pawnee, Ute and Comanche, were captured; and

WHEREAS, indigenous people became part of New Mexican  
communities and households through capture in war, kidnapping,  
trade fairs, punishment for crimes, adoption, abandonment and  
the sale of children; and

WHEREAS, baptismal records reveal that at least four  
thousand six hundred one captive indigenous persons were  
baptized between the years 1700 and 1880, becoming part of  
Spanish, Mexican and territorial households; and

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1           WHEREAS, numerous primary source records document the  
2           captivity, presence and experience of indigenous people  
3           displaced in this way, including marriage records, court cases,  
4           wills and censuses; and

5           WHEREAS, the experiences of captives, while varied,  
6           included being raised and serving within households, and  
7           sometimes remaining in a captor's home for a lifetime; and

8           WHEREAS, the practice of taking Indian captives lasted  
9           through the Mexican and into the American period in New Mexico;  
10          and

11          WHEREAS, there were many terms to describe Indian  
12          captivity and servitude in New Mexico, including "cautivos",  
13          "criados", "coyotes" and "famulos" but the most common used  
14          prior to 1821 and into the Spanish colonial period was the term  
15          "genizaro"; and

16          WHEREAS, the term "genizaro" derives from the Turkish word  
17          "yeniceri" or "janissary", terms used to describe Christian  
18          captives who, as children, had been forcibly abducted, traded  
19          and trained as the nucleus of the Ottoman empire's standing  
20          army; and

21          WHEREAS, genizaro families could be found in various  
22          communities throughout the colony, including the major villages  
23          of Albuquerque, Santa Cruz de la Canada, Santa Fe and El Paso  
24          del Norte; and

25          WHEREAS, in the mid-eighteenth century, many genizaros

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1 were again relocated strategically at the edges of Hispanic  
2 communities, thus providing both an initial line of defense  
3 against raiders and the foundation for communities such as  
4 Abiquiu, Belen, Carnuel, Las Trampas, Ojo Caliente, Ranchos de  
5 Taos, San Miguel del Vado and Tome; and

6 WHEREAS, by 1776, genizaros made up at least one-third of  
7 the entire population of the province; and

8 WHEREAS, genizaros and their descendants have participated  
9 in all aspects of the social, political, military and economic  
10 life of New Mexico during the Spanish, Mexican and American  
11 periods; and

12 WHEREAS, eventually the migration patterns of cautivos and  
13 genizaros paralleled that of all New Mexicans with communities  
14 extending southward to El Paso del Norte (Ciudad Juarez) and  
15 northern Chihuahua, Mexico, as well as northward to Colorado  
16 and beyond; and

17 WHEREAS, the direct result of the Indian slave trade was  
18 the emergence of generations of racial and cultural mixtures  
19 often referred to in the colonial period with terms such as  
20 coyotes, colores quebrados, lobos and mestizos; and

21 WHEREAS, many New Mexicans can trace their ancestry to  
22 these indigenous peoples;

23 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE  
24 OF NEW MEXICO that the important role of genizaros and their  
25 descendants have had in the social, economic, political and

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1 cultural milieu of New Mexico and the United States be  
2 recognized; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the senate recognize the  
4 existence and importance of this indigenous group and the  
5 presence and importance of its descendants today; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be  
7 transmitted to the office of the state historian.

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